

September 3, 2020

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## The Union Election Commission should recognize the voting rights of Rohingya refugees in the November 8 general election in Myanmar

### U Hla Thein

Chairman of the Union Election Commission  
Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Dear Excellency Chairman U Hla Thein,

We, the undersigned Rohingya-led organizations in Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh, urge the Union Election Commission to uphold the right of Rohingya refugees to vote and participate in the 2020 general election in Myanmar.

In recent weeks, the Union Election Commission rejected several Rohingya candidates for office in Myanmar. We call upon the Election Commission to reverse these decisions and uphold the right of Rohingya to participate in the elections.

As citizens of Myanmar, we hold the right to vote. We had the right to vote until 2015 when we were blocked. The Myanmar government has stripped us of our citizenship and ability to participate in political life.

In July, the Union Election Commission announced that Myanmar nationals living abroad could cast votes, continuing the trend of overseas voting from the 2010 and 2015 elections. The Commission should ensure that all Myanmar nationals, including Rohingya refugees, are able to cast votes.

We, the undersigned Rohingya-led organizations, believe that the Embassy of Myanmar in Bangladesh should work with the international community and Bangladesh authorities to facilitate our participation in the general election. The Union Election Commission should publicly declare that it will work to register voters in the refugee camps before the elections. We can assist by disseminating information in the camps.

We are Myanmar nationals. Before the elections, the Myanmar government should restore our citizenship rights and uphold our rights to vote and participate in the general election.

### CC:

Office of the President, Nay  
Pyi Taw, Republic of the  
Union of Myanmar

Honorable Judges,  
International Court of  
Justice, The Hague,  
Netherlands

Mr. Thomas H. Andrews, UN  
Special Rapporteur on the  
Situation of Human Rights in  
Myanmar

### Signed:

Rohingya Peace Innovation  
Unity

Rohingya Peace Initiative

Rohingya Women  
Empowerment and  
Advocacy Network

Rohingya Women for Justice  
and Peace

Rohingya Youth for Legal  
Action

Rohingya Student Union

Rohingya Student Network

Arakan Rohingya National  
Union

Rohingya Youth Association

Arakan Rohingya Society for  
Peace and Human Rights

Voice of Rohingya

Rohingya Women Education  
Initiative

Rohingya Children Education  
Center

Rohingya Youth Federation

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Rohingya Children Education Center

Rohingya Women for Justice and Peace

